



Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.

THE CURSE OF MUNGI.

BY HERBERT C. MACILWAINE.

CHAPTER I.

HE November rains were late, and the earth was showing its naked ribs along the creek-frontages of the tidy Crannoch cattle-run that lay, with its six hundred miles of sound cattle-country, snugly packed away about the headwaters of the Tracy River. Donald McCunn, hard-bitten pioneer of the older days, now man of substance, had been well used this many a year to see his station by mid-November knee-deep in lush pasture and glowing within its boundaries like an emerald. Crannoch was far enough to the west of Queensland to grow pasture of the fattening qualities of Mitchell grass, or of maize itself for the matter of that, and yet near enough to the sea to be saved as a general thing from the full horrors of drought. Added to this, the craggy hills that flanked its eastern end served the old squatter as guardian angels. They were his mighty rain-gatherers; for when, in the spring, the thundering cloud-battalions were marshalled in from the westward, and in late summer when the ocean sent its yearly message of mercy from the east, then always the gray old hills that sentinel Crannoch would demand their toll, and get it in the shape of rain for the old Scotsman's run. 'As green as the paddocks of Crannoch' came to be a local saw—for once a true one.

Donald McCunn, however, not altogether singular among his race perhaps, was more of an expert in matters theological than meteorological; and he gave thanks for Heaven's largess after his own bent. He was given to quoting, with a species of aggressive humility peculiarly his own, selected Bible texts by way of demonstrating to less favoured squatters on suitable occasions that their drought-bitten paddocks and his green ones were manifestly the handiwork of that special Providence that makes a note of the sternly pure

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of heart in this wicked world, and dispenses its mercies accordingly. Thus, amongst his easy-going neighbours, McCunn—dour, steadfast, solvent, and sanctimonious—was hardly looked upon in the light of a boon-companion.

And now Providence appeared to have broken faith with the master of Crannoch, and, unmindful of the past, had turned a hard, reprobating eye upon it. There was none of your Job-like humility about McCunn. How should there be about a man whose fathers in the good old days had rummaged the Scriptures from end to end for congenial guiding principles in the shape of flinty and fiery texts that should bite, turn and turn about with their own stout claymores, the hearts and heads of unbelieving enemies?

No: Donald McCunn sat by his bare table of cypress-pine in righteous bitterness against the world and the elements that encompassed it, and was persuaded that both and all had betrayed him. The open door at his back, that framed a patch of desolation, made up of burning sandridge and naked glistering river gums, and the doorway in front of him, that led to the kitchen across the footworn gangway, both gaped like thirsty mouths in the thrice-parched, blistering air, and not the faintest flutter of a draught stirred between them. Now and then a high-hung, sulky cloud, more like a wreath of smoke than of water-born moisture, would drift across the sun, and, as it passed, the iron on the roof would creep and shudder in the lowered temperature as if a flight of unholy things—drought-demons, maybe—were scampering across the metal with set claws; then the cloud would pass and the demons would make a return-charge. These mocking signs had trailed across the blazing heavens in weird procession throughout the last month, and yet rain seemed farther off than ever.

M'Cunn's elbows were planted firmly upon the table, and he held two tanned and knotted fists planted against his high cheek-bones; the sweat welled out upon him, filling the sharp furrows that patterned his forehead, rayed the corners of his stone-gray eyes, and drew two deep, hard lines of obstinacy at either end of the straight-drawn, thin-lipped mouth. A fringe of grizzled beard and a hood of erect and defiant hair framed the whole stern face. A well-thumbed Bible was at his right elbow; beneath his eyes lay a map of Crannoch and its surrounding runs; a crumpled copy of the local newspaper was on his left. Donald M'Cunn was in a black and bitter mood. A drop of dusty sweat fell with a distinct smack from the stubby beard upon the map, and lighted on the central block of the station that neighboured Crannoch on the east. He angrily smeared the offending moisture with a big rough finger over a couple of hundred miles of country, and broke his silence, staring out vindictively across the kitchen gangway.

'You might have thought that a God-fearing, sober man 'ud had enough to thole in seeing his cattle, the pride of his life and his years, dying for the want of nourishment, Hannah?'

A girl who lay in a cane chair behind the squatter—a woman rather, formed, as to face, body, and limbs, on stately and yet homely lines—raised her eyes from a book upon her knees and looked somewhat indifferently at her father's back, stretching both arms above her. She knit her large hands behind her head and leaned it back against them without answering.

The squatter's eyes grew harder, and he kept them accusingly on the staring sunshine without. 'You dinna answer, Hannah! Ah! more and m-o-ore I've obsairved of late that your father's troubles are little—ay, little, and growing noticeably less—to you.' There was an increasing skirl in his voice, as though a grievance and a pretext for anger were entirely seasonable to his humour.

The tall girl said, in a motherly contralto tuned by nature to carry comfort where comfort was possible, and as if a minor matter had been opened up for discussion: 'The rain'll come, father, for sure. And what's the fresh trouble?'

'The rain—hech! And lo! a prophet has come forth.' He spoke acridly, then banged the crumpled newspaper noisily with his open hand. 'And look how ye prove my word to me. Hev ye forgotten so soon what I read to ye out of here a shorrt hour ago? Is there not trouble full measure in that?'

'Eh?' she answered, still placidly; 'that a successor to that poor Mr Baynton is coming to work Mungi? Is it troubled you are, father, that your neighbours are coming by their own again?'

Mungi was the neighbouring run on the plan of which the squatter's sweat-drop had fallen, giving words to his wrath.

'Their own, their own!' he shouted, still not turning, and he shook his fist at the blinding sunlight outside; 'theirs—that should be mine! Have I not told you, girl, for years, that, morally and speeritually, before the Lorrd, I was robbed of that block o' lan?' And the dry passion of earth-hunger—the bloodless lust as deep as the craving for gold or drink—scowled beneath his bushy black eyebrows as he spoke.

The girl, still leaning her head against the interwoven fingers, looked with a broad pity, not unmixed with something of large scornfulness in her big gray eyes, at her father's moist shirt and erect thatch of grizzled hair, and said nothing.

'Ay,' he went on, with gathering bitterness, 'the land that I wanted to complete the Crannoch run was taken up by stealth; it was like the worrk of a thief in the dead of night. And didna the Lorrd set the seal of His disapproval on the home at Mungi there from the day of its building? Didna the pleuro ravage his cattle; and from the day his wife died in childbirth—the cane chair creaked as the girl moved uneasily in it, but the old man went on relentlessly—from that day was there an hour's happiness for Baynton when the drink laid hold of him till they found him lying across his own doorstep with his—'

'Father!' She had risen and was standing behind him with a long, sunburned hand on each of his shoulders.

He went on without heeding her. 'E-e-c-h, since yon time two-an'-twenty year syne, that I hurried to the Lands Office in Brisbane and found he had been before me, and taken up the Mungi blocks, and since I stood and—Na, na'—he raised a shaking hand—'I didna curse him; but I called on God to gie the both of us just measure according to our desairts before Him. I did that. And He judged between us, and sent a blight upon that house, so that not one stone'—' He broke off with a dry chuckle, remembering, apparently, that the scriptural imagery hardly applied to a house built of wooden slabs. His laugh was the laugh of a man who has known vengeance and is at work to cheat himself into the belief that the taste of it is sweet and not like ashes in the mouth.

The girl's hands had fallen to her side. 'Father,' she said, as if unwillingly, 'I—where is the humilitiy that you urge upon other folk?'

'Humeelity!' he roared; but still he did not turn to face her. 'You dare to, you, you'—and he closed his teeth with a snap. 'Humeelity,' he expounded, with a kind of savage mildness, 'is for them that feel the weight of the Lorrd's hand upon them. But to them that sairve Him all their days it is permitted to rejoice when they perceive that it is His pleasure to humble their enemies in the dust before them.'

Apparently the humorous aspect of this jumbling together of greed with creed on the part of the

old man was not entirely lost upon the girl, for the wryness that it brought to her face was tempered by a patient smile. Again she remained silent.

M'Cunn began to fold up his map violently, waxing the bitterer for want of open opposition. 'Mind me, Hannah, there's a blight upon that house—the curse that goes wi' ill-gotten goods. It killed the wife and child, and blasted the herra, and drove Baynton to shed his ain blood upon his ain doorstep. An' lay this to your heart'—he squeezed a knotted fist on the folded map—'whoever comes to Mungi, they're strangers to us, an' us to them, for the wrath of Almighty God is upon them, and we dinna want the canker to spread among us here.'

This quaint exposition of the economic aspect of spiritual matters again made Hannah mix tolerance with her frown.

'You hear?' M'Cunn said fiercely, spinning round in his seat at last, and facing her as she stood back from and above him, with her arms folded beneath the rounded softness of her breast.

Under her steady look the father wilted oddly; it was easy to see now why he had checked his impulse to turn upon her before. Donald M'Cunn in his soul feared the daughter that stood above him like a bush-goddess. The sting was gone from his anger suddenly, leaving it merely futile; and though he sought with extra vehemence to enforce his command by repeating it many times and rapping noisily on the table with his great knuckles, one could see that it rested solely with the tall girl as to whether she heeded him or not.

She said steadily: 'I hear you, father—I hear you; and I'll heed you to the letter'—she paused—'while I live beneath your roof.'

He brightened, almost humbly, as if he were a

grateful suppliant instead of the hectoring parent of a moment ago. 'Eh, there now,' he fawned, 'the good lassie!'

'You heard my words, father?'

'Ay, ay, I heard you.'

'While I eat your bread'—

'Ay, ay,' he said blankly; he fingered senilely at his lean jaws, looking up furtively; and it was plain to see that strife was going on within him between tenderness and wrath. A hand he had raised towards her paused midway. The contest in M'Cunn ended in a compromise; he withdrew the hand and scratched the stubble on his cheek raspingly with a forefinger. 'Mebbe you'll see to the denner, Hannah?' he said.

Hannah went out to the kitchen, showing in her walk the strength of a savage, the free grace of glowing health, and the dignity of one of Nature's appointed queens. The old squatter, struck with a rare fit of abstraction, watched the girl go out, and sat looking long at the empty doorway; his straight lips fell apart, and the graven lines about his mouth took on a kindlier look, as though the spring that braced his jaws together had been suddenly eased. But he soon came to himself with a start, said 'Hoots,' shut his mouth as if the spring had been restored to its office, and scowled about him, uttering a deep, long-drawn 'H—m, h—m!' then rose to his feet and made to hurry from the room. But he stopped before the cane chair, where the cushion still showed the faint mould of Hannah's body, and where her book was lying open and face downwards. He stooped to peer suspiciously at the title, and, looking up to the iron roof and shaking both hands above his head like a prophet of woe, he repeated it in a half-whisper: '*Their Father's Sins.*'

THE GOLDEN KOOTENAYS IN 1898.

WHEN the Klondike gold-fever spread to the Old Country, the writer of this article was amongst the earliest upon whom the epidemic laid hold. The news of the great 'strikes' in the far North-west was sufficient to once more arouse to action the instincts of the old prospector, then living quietly in England, after many years spent upon Australian gold-fields.

In less than a fortnight the writer was crossing the Atlantic, *en route* for the new Eldorado. Coming across Canada, upon the Canadian Pacific Railway, were many mining men; and, as the result of conversations held during the long journey westward, the writer decided to winter in the Kootenays, and to continue the journey to Klondike in the spring.

The geographical position of the Yukon country is by this time well known to most people; but there are many who will not have a like knowledge of the locality of the 'Golden Kootenays.' In endeavouring to enlighten the reader upon this point, and also to bring into more deserving prominence the resources and wealth of this little-known portion of the Dominion, the writer is actuated by the desire to 'switch off,' if possible, some of the human current which is flowing Klondike-wards into what will probably prove a far more profitable channel, and one in which fewer obstacles will be encountered.

Scattered over the Kootenays are many prosperous mining towns and camps, the principal of which is Rossland, in the Trail Creek mining division of Western Kootenay. We will confine our attention chiefly to this dis-

trict, as it is here that some of the most remarkable developments have been, and are, taking place.

Little more than three years ago the present site of Rossland was covered with forest, the haunt of the puma and the bear. Here and there, in the surrounding mountains, were the camps of the mining pioneers, to whose adventurous researches the present prosperity of the district is due.

Rossland is now an incorporated city of 7000 inhabitants, with churches, schools, hospital, banks, electric light, newspapers, &c.; and the energetic and successful development of the rich gold-mines in the surrounding mountains bids fair to make the city one of the most promising in British Columbia.

As the town is situated at an altitude of 3325 feet, the weather in winter is somewhat cold, but on account of the extreme dryness of the atmosphere, little discomfort is felt. The temperature seldom falls many degrees below zero, while in July and August the thermometer often reaches the nineties. There are several feet of snow in the winter, when sleighing takes the place of wheel-traffic; but once the snow becomes packed down and solid, pedestrians feel but little inconvenience. Two lines of railway serpentine their way up the mountain-sides, making Rossland their terminal point. One line runs from the United States (the boundary-line of which country is but a few miles distant), where it has connections with the great American trunk lines to all parts of the States. The other railway is connected with the great Canadian Pacific Railway system, *vid* Robson on the Columbia River, reaching Rossland through Trail, a 'smelting' town.

The population of Rossland is principally composed of Americans and Canadians, and one meets but few who actually hail from the United Kingdom. One of the most striking features of the place is the almost entire absence of rowdyism of any kind. In a Western mining town one expects to hear of shooting affrays and mob law; such, however, is not the case in Rossland. In this respect it shows a marked contrast with the American mining towns, where shooting is common and the law lenient.

Immediately surrounding the town are some of the richest gold-mines in the Kootenays, from which in the near future an immense output of gold may be expected. The following figures will give the reader some idea of the great developments which have recently taken place.

During 1897 the total output of the Kootenay mines was \$8,136,696 dollars, or considerably more than the entire yield of all the lode-mines of British Columbia for the ten previous years. This yield speaks volumes, when it is considered that most of the mines are as yet only partially developed. Taking the 'Trail Creek' mining division alone, one finds that the output for last year was 150 per cent. more than the pro-

duct of 1896, and 330 per cent. more than that of 1895.

The following figures will serve to show the richness of the gold-bearing ores mined round Rossland.

Taking the famous 'Le Roi' mine alone, we find that, during 1897, 57,437 tons of ore produced gold to the value of \$2,125,169 dollars, and copper to the value of \$44,622 dollars. This shows a value of 37 dollars per ton in gold and six dollars in copper, or a total of 43 dollars per ton.

During the year 1897, dividends to the value of \$25,000 dollars were paid by this company, the shareholders in which are mostly Americans.

Until quite recently the interests held by British investors in the district were comparatively small, but it is encouraging to find that British money is beginning to flow in this direction. The writer has never in any other country witnessed developments which promised such rich and enduring returns for well-directed outlay. The element of chance, which is always more or less a factor in metalliferous mining, seems here to be reduced to a minimum, and the ever-increasing prosperity appears to be built upon a solid and enduring foundation.

The present year will probably witness some of the most remarkable and successful mineral developments the world has ever seen. These mountains and valleys are, day by day, yielding up more and more of their immense riches. It is only the miner or mineralogist who has actually visited the Kootenays who can form an adequate idea of their mineral wealth. Gold, silver, copper, and lead occur here in great fissure-veins, with quartz and iron-pyrites.

Although 'free gold' and 'placer' are found in considerable quantities, yet here in the Kootenays they are mostly found in sulphide combinations; this necessitates smelting, thus creating an industry in which are other promising openings for the capitalist, and in which a large number of people obtain employment.

Some seven miles from Rossland is the town of Trail, situated on the banks of the Columbia River. Here is a large smelter, which is connected by railway with Rossland and other mining centres. Some hundreds of men find employment here at wages ranging from two to five dollars a day. There are several other smelters in the Kootenays, and this industry bids fair to assume large proportions in the near future.

The Klondike gold excitement will greatly assist in drawing attention to this part of British Columbia, and doubtless many of the thousands who will be disappointed in the frozen north will eventually find their way to this district, where they will encounter fewer difficulties and meet with many opportunities for the profitable employment of brain and muscle.

The forests abound with game, and it is no uncommon sight to see deer and bear meat hang-

ing in the butcher's shop. Everywhere are creeks and rivers teeming with fish; in fact, a Winchester rifle and a fishing-rod furnish both good sport and are most useful for replenishing the larder.

There are many openings in the Kootenays for the speculator and the small capitalist; especially are there great possibilities for the poor man, the artisan, or the young fellow who is not too 'big' to take off his coat for three dollars a day. Employment here, as elsewhere, has to be sought; but few would arrive here without enough money in their pockets to live upon whilst seeking work. Competent miners receive from three to three and a half dollars a day, and ordinary unskilled labourers from two to three dollars a day.

If a man lives in his own 'cabin' he can live very well on half a dollar a day, so it is

evident that the careful man can soon save money.

There is little or no demand for clerks or shopmen; but any one able and strong enough to do arduous manual work can soon obtain an opening at rates which will enable him to put by some money. Introductions, unless especially strong, are likely to be of little use; but the new arrival who comes furnished with enough means to look round for employment will find that he can get on very well without them. There are no openings for idlers; but for any one who is not absolutely destitute there are good chances to be met with for the seeking.

In conclusion, the writer may add that his affections are weaned from Klondike, and set upon the great possibilities of the 'Golden Kootenays.'

JOHN BURNET OF BARNS.

By JOHN BUCHAN.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—HOW THREE MEN HELD A TOWN IN TERROR.

MIT was towards evening—a dark November evening—that we came near the little town of Biggar. The place lies on a sandy bank raised from the wide moss which extends for miles by the edge of the sluggish stream. It is a black, desolate spot, where whaups and snipe whistle in the back streets, and a lane which begins from the causeway may end in a pool of dark moss-water. But the street is marvellous broad; and there, at the tail of the autumn, is held one of the greatest fairs in the Lowlands of Scotland, whither hawkers and tinkers come in hordes, not to speak of serving-men and serving-lasses who seek hire. For three days the thing goes on, and for racket and babble it is unmatched in the country-side.

We halted before the entrance to the town, on a square of dry ground in the midst of the water-way. I know not how many the gipsies were, but with women and children they were not less in number than ninety or a hundred. They had with them a great quantity of gear of all kinds, and their animals were infinite. Forby their horses and asses, they had dogs and fowls and many tamed birds, which travelled in their company. It is a trait of these strange people that they must ever have something on which to expend their affection; and while the women have their children, the men have their pets. The most grim and quarrelsome tinker will tend some beast or bird, and share with it his last meal.

When the camp was made, the fire lit, and the evening meal prepared, the men got out their violins and bagpipes, and set themselves to enliven the night with music. There, in the clear space in front of the fire, they danced to the

tunes with great glee and skill. I sat beside the captain and watched the picture, and in very truth it was a pleasing one. The men, as I have said, were for the most part lithe and tall, and they danced with grace. The gipsy women after the age of twenty grow too harsh-featured for beauty and too manly in stature for elegance. But before that age they are uniformly pretty. The free open-air life and the healthy fare make them strong in body and extraordinarily graceful in movement. Their well-formed features, their keen laughing black eyes, their rich complexions, and, above all, their masses of coal-black hair become them choisely well. So, there in the ruddy firelight, they danced to the quavering music, and peace for once in a while lay among them.

Meanwhile I sat apart with William Baillie, and talked of many things. He filled for me a pipe of tobacco, and I essayed a practice which I had often heard of before, but never made trial of. I found it very soothing, and we sat there in the bield of the tent and discoursed of our several wanderings. I heard from him wild tales of doings in the hills from the Pentlands to the Cumberland fells, for his habits took him far and wide in the country. He told all with the greatest indifference, affecting the air of an ancient Stoic, to whom all things, good and evil alike, were the same. Every now and then he would break in with a piece of moralising, which he delivered with complete gravity, but which seemed to me matter for laughter, coming as it did after some racy narrative of how he vanquished Moss Marshall at the sheiling of Kipper-tree or cheated the alewife at Newbigging out of her score.

On the morrow all went off to the fair save

myself, and I was left with the children and the dogs. The captain had judged it better that I should stay, since there would be folk there from around Barnes and Dawyck, who might penetrate my disguise and spread the tidings. So I stayed at home and pondered over many things, notably my present predicament. I thought of all my old hopes and plans—to be a scholar and a gentleman of spirit; to look well to my lands, and have a great name in the country-side; to study and make books; maybe even to engage in parliament and State business. And what did I now? Travelling in disguise among tinkers, a branded man, with my love and my lands in danger—nay, all but lost. It was this accursed thought that made the bitterest part of my wanderings.

I was in such a mood when a servant came from a farmhouse near to get one of the gipsies to come and mend the kitchen-pot. As I was the only one left, there was nothing for it but to go. The adventure cheered me, for its whimsicality made me laugh, and laughter is the best antidote to despair. But I fared very badly, for when I tried my 'prentice hand at the pot, I was so manifestly incapable that the goodwife drove me from the place, calling me an idle sorner and a lazy vagabond, and many other well-deserved names. I returned to the camp with my ears still ringing from her cuff, but in a more wholesome temper of mind.

The greater part of the others returned at the darkening, most with well-filled pockets, though I fear it was not all come by honestly; and a special feast was prepared. That gipsy meal was of the strangest yet most excellent quality. There was a savoury soup made of all kinds of stewed game and poultry, and after that the flesh of pigs and game roasted and broiled. There was no seasoning to the food save a kind of very bitter vinegar; for these people care little for salt or any condiment.

The meal was over, and I was thinking of lying down for the night, when William Baillie came back. I noted in the firelight that his face was black with anger. I heard him speak to several of his men, and his tone was that of one who was mastering some passion. By-and-by he came to where I sat and lay down beside me.

'Do you wish to pleasure me?' he said shortly.

'Why, yes,' I answered; 'you have saved my life, and I would do all in my power to oblige you, though I fear that just now my power is little.'

'It's a' I want,' said he, leaving his more correct speech for the broad Scots of the country-side. 'Listen, and I'll tell ye what happened the day at the fair. We tinker-folk gaed aboot our business, daein' ill to none, and behavin' like decent, peaceable, quiet-mannered men and women. The place was in a gey steer, for a heap o' wast-country trash was there frae the backs o' Straven

and Douglasdale, and since a' the godly and reputable folk thereways ha'e ta'en to the hills, nane but the rabble are left. So we were gaun on canny, sellin' our bits o' things and daein' our bits o' jobs, while the drucken folk were dancin' and cairryin' on at the ither end. By-and-by doon the fair came a drucken gardener, one John Cree. I ken him weel, a fosy, black-herdit scoundrel as ever I saw. My wife, whom you ken—for it was her that lookit after ye when ye were sick—was standin' at the side when the man sees her. He comes up to her wi' his leerin', blackguardly face, and misca's her for a tinker and a' that was bad, as if the warst in our tribe wasna better than him.

'Mary, she stands back, and bids him get out or she wad learn him mainners.

'But he wadna take a tellin'. "Oh ho, my bawbee joe," says he, "ye're braw and high the day. Whae are ye to despise an honest man? A wheen tinkler doxies!" And he took up a stane and struck her on the face.

'At this a' our folk were for puttin' an end to him there and then. But I keepit them back and bade them let the drucken fule be. Syne he gaed awa; but the folk o' the fair took him up, and we've got nocht but ill-words and ill-tongue a' day. But they'll pay for it the morn! And the captain looked long and fiercely into the embers.

'I ha'e a plan,' said he after a little; 'and, Master Burnet, I want ye to help me. The folk o' the fair are just a wheen scum and riddlings. There are three o' us here, proper men—you and myself and my son Matthew. If ye will agree to it, we three will mount horse the morn, clear oot that fair, and frichtten the folk o' Biggar for the next twalmonth.'

'What would you do?' said I.

'I ha'e three suits,' he said, 'o' guid crimson cloth, whicht I got frae my grandfather, and have never worn. I have three braw horses, which cam' oot o' England three year syne. If the three o' us mount and ride through the fair, there will be sic a scattering as was never heard tell o' afore i' the auld toun. And if that gardener-body doesna gang wud wi' fricht, my name's no' William Baillie.'

Now, I do not know what madness prompted me to join in this freak. For certain, it was a most unbecoming thing for a man of birth to be perched on horseback in the company of two reckless tinkers, to break the king's peace and terrify his Majesty's lieges of Biggar. But a dare-devil spirit—the recoil from the morning's despondency—now held me. Besides, the romance of the thing took me captive; it was as well that a man should play all the parts he could in the world; and to my foolish mind it seemed a fine thing that one who was a man of birth and learning should not scruple to cast in his lot with the rough gipsies.

So I agreed readily enough, and soon after went to sleep with weariness, and knew nothing till the stormy dawn woke the camp.

Then the three of us dressed in the crimson suits, and monstrously fine we looked. The day was dull, cloudy, and with a threat of snow; and the massing of clouds which we had noticed the day before was now a thousandfold greater. We trotted out over the green borders of the bog to the town, where the riot and hilarity were audible. The sight of the three to any chance spectator must have been fearsome beyond the common. William Baillie, not to speak of his great height and strange dress, had long black hair, which hung far below his shoulders; and his scarlet hat and plume made him look like the devil in person. Matthew, his son, was somewhat smaller, but broad and sinewy; and he sat his horse with an admirable grace. As for myself, my face was tanned with sun and air and the gipsy dye; my hair hung loosely on my shoulders in the fashion I have always worn it; and I could sit a horse with the best of them.

When we came near the head of the street we halted and consulted. The captain bade us obey him in all, follow wherever he went, and, above all, let no word come from our mouth. Then we turned up our sleeves above the elbows, drew our swords, and rode into the town.

At the first sight of the three strange men who rode abreast, a great cry of amazement arose, and the miscellaneous rabble was hushed. Then in a voice of thunder the captain cried out that they had despised the gypsies the day before, and that now was the time of revenge. Suiting

action to the word, he held his naked sword before him, and we followed at a canter.

I have never seen so complete a rout in my life. Stalls, booths, and tables were overturned, and the crowd flew wildly in all directions. The others of the tribe, who had come to see the show, looked on from the back, and to the terrified people seemed like fresh assailants. I have never heard such a hubbub as rose from the fleeing men and screaming women. Farmers, country-folk, and ploughmen mingled with fat burgesses and the craftsmen of the town in one wild rush for safety. And yet we touched no one, but kept on our way to the foot of the street, with our drawn swords held stark upright in our hands. Then we turned and came back; and lo! the great fair was empty, and wild, fearful faces looked at us from window and lane.

Then on our second ride appeared at the church gate the minister of the parish, a valiant man, who bade us halt.

'Stop,' said he, 'you men of blood, and cease from disturbing the town, or I will have you all clapped in the stocks for a week.'

Then the captain spoke up, and told him of the wrong and insult of the day before.

At this the worthy man looked grave. 'Go back to your place,' he said, 'and it shall be seen to. I am wae that the folk of this town, who have the benefit of my ministrations, set no better example to puir heathen Egyptians. But give up the quarrel at my bidding. "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," saith the Lord.'

'But haply, sir,' said I, 'as Augustine saith, we may be the Lord's executors.' And with this we turned and rode off, leaving the man staring in open-mouthed wonder.

S T R E N G T H :

SOME ENDEAVOURS TO ATTAIN AND RETAIN IT.



NY one telling us in a satisfactory manner how to get strong and remain so would be morally certain of fame and fortune and a kind of earthly immortality. This is what all seek but very few find; and there is always so much in heredity and environment; much also in ways of living, for every day we witness persons spending fortunes in gradually ruining their health, and others fortunes in vainly trying to regain what they have lost—indeed, the millions spent in the endeavour to regain health are quite beyond human calculation. So are the remedies; for every disease, almost without exception, save the Last Enemy, has its alleviation at least, if not its cure, in these enlightened days. According to Voltaire, every one wishes to live long, and nobody wishes to be old; but few will pay

the price demanded. Care killed a cat; therefore work as hard as you like, but do not worry. Never give in; battle to the last, said Sir Andrew Clark. Sir Isaac Holden, who died at the age of ninety, preached and practised open-air exercise, method, and a mild kind of vegetarianism. So did Sir Isaac Pitman, the apostle of shorthand, who was eighty-four when he died. Both had been very hard workers from youth till past middle age. So was Lord Armstrong, founder of the Elswick Works, who has had abundant hobbies and inventions always on hand; he was born in 1810, and confesses to having only indulged in a plain and wholesome diet. No man of this generation lived a more useful life than the late George Müller of Bristol, who died in his ninety-third year, yet in his youth he was threatened with consumption, and always had a weak digestion.

To return to Sir Isaac Holden. Even in later life he walked his seven or eight miles a day, in all weathers and in both town and country. At first a puny, unthriving child, he was forced to be regular and temperate. When he became book-keeper and manager at Cullingworth he stipulated with his employers that he should have two hours for open-air exercise every forenoon. This was part of his health programme. 'I know,' he said, 'innumerable cases of men who started with a constitution twice as strong as mine. They had no stomachs. I had a stomach, and was obliged to take care.'

And he did take care, and humoured his stomach in this way. He would take for breakfast one baked apple, one orange, twenty grapes, and a biscuit made from banana flour, of the virtues of which we have something to say farther on. His midday meal consisted of about three ounces of beef or mutton, with now and again a half-cupful of soup. If he took a little fish, he took so much less of meat. His diet at supper was practically a repetition of breakfast. It was a belief probably gained from Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* or Wesley's *Journal*, upon which he acted, that after the system had been built up, and the period of manhood reached, all starchy foods should be banished from the diet. Once, when complimented on the success of his methods of living, he explained: 'Some people imagine it to be my ambition to live to a great age. That is not exactly my object; but I do desire, so long as I am spared, to retain my senses, and to avoid the miseries and infirmities that so often accompany a carelessly regulated old age.'

'We eat too much,' says Dr Keith, who, in his *Plea for a Simpler Life*, seems to many the apologist for semi-starvation. When he reached seventy Oliver Wendell Holmes was as cheerful, if not quite as active, as ever, and he began with his trained doctor's mind and accurate observation to mark the on-coming of old age. In his old age Arthur Young, writer on agriculture, rose at 4 A.M. and walked till up to the neck in his garden pond!

There was some nonsense as well as wit and good sense in Charles Lamb's reply to his friend Bernard Barton, who sent him a complaining letter about his health. Lamb recommended Barton to keep himself as ignorant as the world was before Galen of the entire inner constitution of the animal man. He was to be unconscious of a midriff, and to hold kidneys, save of sheep and swine, to be an agreeable fiction. 'For,' he said, 'once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like so many bad humours.' Curiously enough this is the conclusion come to by a writer in the *Daily News* on 'How to Live Long.' We are there told that they are likely to live longest who are too much engrossed with subjects of interest to greatly concern themselves with their own personal mechanism. With physiology

taught at every Board school such a state of mind is impossible, even were it desirable. The hypochondriac still consults and bores every friend he has regarding his ailments, and this very attitude of mind becomes an ailment in itself. He reads many doctors' books, and discovers symptoms of fresh troubles, especially if he is of a nervous temperament. He becomes a walking advertisement of cures which do not cure. Like the Cornish shopkeeper who sold a certain cure for coughs, and possessed a chronic cough himself, they cannot reply like him, when twitted with the remark, 'Physician, cure thyself;' that 'In me you behold a terrible example of the danger of delay: I left it too long before I took the medicine. See that you don't.'

Without going so far as a recent writer in the *Spectator*, who quotes a medical man's private utterance, that three-fourths of medicine was guess-work, we note that there has been within recent years a decided onslaught by both doctor and patient on the taking of drugs. Dr Smiles, who was a medical man before he was a book-maker, said years ago, in his first book on *Physical Education*, that the surest way to ensure health was to adopt the natural means to preserve it, by pure air, exercise, and a healthy supply of food. Children were then the victims, he thought, of a mania for medicine, and not infrequently destroyed by its too frequent use. The doctor should be a preservative of health rather than one who cures self-induced diseases. This has often been said since in other forms, as on 'The Use and Abuse of Medicine,' by a physician, in this *Journal*, May 5, 1849.

There is no use of running amuck against medicine, however, which is invaluable in its own place. But, like law, it is best to be independent of it, and by diet, temperance, and exercise to render it unnecessary. The remark has more than once been made: 'What untold good is done by the shiploads of oranges imported and consumed!' The same is true of apples and many other common fruits, which supplement solid food and act as correctives in keeping the system healthy. The lentil in all its forms is a strengthening and life-sustaining food. Mr H. M. Stanley has more than once acknowledged that he owes his life to banana meal. But, as imported from the West Indies, and sold at one shilling and sixpence a pound in this country, there is only a limited demand for it. 'If only,' says Mr Stanley in his *Darkest Africa*, 'the virtues of the flour were publicly known, it is not to be doubted but it would be largely consumed in Europe. During my two attacks of gastritis, a light gruel of this, mixed with milk, was the only matter that could be digested.' A letter from Mrs Stanley to the agent for the banana meal in Edinburgh relates how it had again pulled him through in June 1896.

We fancy that a good cook is sometimes as

worthy of canonisation as some of the dirty saints of antiquity, who isolated themselves from their fellow-men and did little to make the world go round. Cookery and domestic economy are rightly every-day subjects in our Board schools. Next generation should be less wasteful, and be able more widely and wisely to adapt food to the requirements of work and constitution.

Dr Thomas Oliver, physician to the Royal Infirmary, Newcastle, and Professor of Physiology in the University of Durham, some time ago read a paper at Budapest on 'The Best Diet of Toil.' He regrets, as so many have done, that tea and bread and butter have ousted milk and oatmeal porridge almost entirely from the diet of the people. He condemns the wives of many of the workers in the textile industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire as being ignorant of good cookery. Too much meat is eaten, and many nutritious vegetable food-stuffs, such as lentils, are not half-utilised. Irregular feeding of coal-miners, owing to a weekly shift of hours, leads to flatulent dyspepsia; many artisans induce this also by bolting their food. He has had practical demonstration of this in the infirmary in a *post-mortem* after a fatal accident.

Dr Oliver reminds us that the oils and fats stand first on the list as force-producers, and that these are followed by butter, cheese, oatmeal, flour, peasemeal, arrowroot, yolk of egg, sugar, bread, lean beef, potatoes, milk, and green vegetables. He gives sugar a high place as a help to the increase of muscular power—from six to thirty-nine per cent. in some instances. Sugar added to any diet greatly increases power of work and general resistance to fatigue; and he gives the testimony of Harley as to the absence of risk of diabetes. Sir Thomas Brassey found that the best navvies were teetotalers, and that where three hundred of them had to widen a gauge, and had to effect the change quickly, working night and day, a diet of oatmeal gruel was found most effective for keeping up their energy.

Dr Rabagliati of Leeds, in his recently issued book on *Air, Food, and Exercise* (1897), sets down colds, bronchitis, and cancer as the cumulative effects of excessive consumption of starchy foods, a conclusion which seems startling at first, but which is certainly worthy of serious consideration. He recommends, as Dr Keith and others have done, beginning the day with from half-a-pint to a pint of hot water an hour before breakfast. In his observation and experience, the most common and fatal habit is to eat food too often. He recommends five hours at least between meals, and if possible only two meals a day. Many men in this are a law unto themselves; and Victor Hugo, when working before breakfast, took a cup of black coffee and a raw egg, which kept up his strength without unduly withdrawing the blood from the brain.

This leads us to say something about exercise, which in the case of the busy and engrossed

professional man is sometimes neglected until too late. Cycling suits some people admirably. Mr T. P. O'Connor said lately that it had made a new man of him. Golf has worked wonders with others, and every one has a favourite form of exercise. A result of exercise and good health is that it breeds cheerfulness, which is radiated upon all around. An extraordinary case of cure from nervous breakdown is that related by an American gentleman, Mr Theodore H. Mead, in his *Health without Medicine*, issued by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. He suffered from sleeplessness, shortness of breath, and two different sorts of headache. By a series of most original exercises, too elaborate to describe here, in his own chamber, and by cold bathing, he was restored to perfect health.

Count Sebastian F—, of Leghorn, has also issued a little pamphlet in which he declares that he feels quite young although in his seventy-first year. This 'apostle of physical education,' as he styles himself, describes in rhyme his daily routine of exercises. Before dressing in the morning he grooms his skin with stiff brushes until it glows. Next he hangs from a bar, drawing himself up and down ten times; then he raises himself several times by the right and left hand alone. His further evolutions, as far as we can understand him, seem to be his sitting like a miner, then raising himself repeatedly, and afterwards hopping to strengthen the sinews of the calf of the leg and thigh. Next he swings ten times between two chairs placed back to back, then he has club exercise, a race round the room, a jump over a stool, followed by a cold sponge-bath, which finishes this strange programme. He now returns to bed, takes a light breakfast, and afterwards dresses and saunters out. We are afraid some lazy people would count ten or twenty years of life dear at this price.

Perhaps the caution which Mr F. Marion Crawford, the novelist, has furnished is needed here. According to his experience, evening is the time to read, and night the time to sleep. A literary man, he believes, should take exercise, but no more than is necessary for health. 'It is vastly better,' he says, 'for the brain to rest too little than to practise athletics too much. Hard rowing, excessive walking, and running exhaust the brain as much as the body. I speak with knowledge, for I have done more physical work than most men in my time, and I do not believe it ever did me any good.' Athletics, he believes further, have been overdone in our day.

Eugene Sandow's secret of strength is now pretty much of an open secret to those who have seen his wonderful performances and read his books or the articles of the ubiquitous interviewer. *Exercise is as necessary as food* is one of his golden rules, and one he has acted upon. He lays down no hard-and-fast rules as to diet,

so long as his pupils are temperate and eat what agrees with them. He walks into his cold bath, although bathed in perspiration from some of his feats, and is not careful to dry himself much afterwards. The heat in the body soon does that when there is plenty of reaction. It might be rash in his pupils, however, to imitate him in this.

Until his tenth year, he tells us, he never knew what strength was. A visit along with his father to the sculpture galleries of Rome and Florence awakened within him an admiration of the splendidly developed sculptured figures of the athletes of old. When he returned to Königsberg it was his ambition to grow strong like them. He attended a gymnasium, and at eighteen studied anatomy. It was then he devised his system of developing the body by giving every muscle a separate movement, and he only devoted about fifteen minutes each day to his exercises. At twenty-one he had decidedly in-

creased in strength. In 1889 he heard of the challenge which Samson was making at the Royal Aquarium, London, of £100 to the first person who should rival the feats of Cyclops, and £1000 to any one who could beat his own. Sandow came, saw, and conquered, and this was the beginning of his career as a public performer in this country and America.

Constant and persistent exercise, therefore, of every muscle in the body is Sandow's open secret, and wherever he has performed, a crop of persons using his 'Exerciser' has sprung up. Not every one may become an athlete under his system; but where there is a healthy basis to work upon, his training seems to work wonders, and his School of Physical Culture has been crowded with pupils. To those who have perseverance and originality enough, a wonderful amount of muscular vigour and good health thus seems possible; yet many find Doctors Diet, Quiet, and Merryman still the best of physicians.

A THUG'S CONSCIENCE.

By F. W. EVANS.



OU lads have a fine time of it nowadays, with your machine-guns and a commissariat that knows canned meat from castor-oil.'

It was an Indian veteran who spoke—Colonel Carrill—to whom Myers and I, returned from Dacoit-hunting in Burma, had been relating our exploits.

'Fifty years ago fighting was fighting,' he went on, 'but now—'

We smiled the smile of the young and up-to-date. What did he know of the vagaries of the modern savage: of the Dacoit who came in the night noiselessly and parted life and death with an ugly and unnecessarily large stab in the breast?

The colonel read our thoughts.

'Dacoits may be a stealthier foe,' he said, 'but for undiluted vagabondism and downright villainy give me the Thugs.'

'They must have been bad,' I ventured.

'At the very best; and yet I found a little grain of virtue in one,' said the veteran. 'Shall I tell you a yarn? It will be like a page of ancient history now, but I don't think it has been told before; and really Hosein Ali was a picturesque scoundrel who deserved record—and hanging.'

'It was in the autumn of '34,' proceeded the colonel, 'I went out from Hyderabad under Major Groves northward across the Godaverry after Thugs. The authorities were getting their eyes wide open at last, and a great effort was being made to exterminate the villains. After a week or so of reconnoitring and inquiry we separated.

Groves sent me off on my own account with a troop of about thirty sepoys and a couple of non-coms. We had no success until Hosein Ali fell into our hands. He was taken, not exactly red-handed, but just after the act, with the proofs of guilt thick upon him and the spoil in his possession. Yet he denied with all the stubbornness of innocence.

"I know nothing of what you say, sahib. I am from beyond the Kristna."

'I looked long and fixedly at the man. He was a fine specimen of a fine race. Tall, and straight as a bamboo; comely of feature and limb, with a handsome and well-kept beard and moustache, and black eyes which glowed with indignation and a hint of defiance, he looked anything but the scoundrel he was. If I had not been so absolutely certain of his guilt, I must have doubted that one of so gallant a bearing could be that worst of all criminals, a Thug.'

"What are you doing here, then?" I asked him. "What is your trade, your occupation? How did you come by these pearls?"

"If I answer the sahib at all," he replied, "it is that he may be satisfied and let me go on my journey in peace. I am on travel honestly to my sister's wedding, and the stones are a wedding gift."

'The words came glibly off his tongue; but just as my eyes left his I saw the defiant expression change for a second to a furtive glance, which seemed to me to say, "Is he fool enough to believe it?"

"I don't believe a word," said I, replying to his glance; "you are a Thug and a murderer, and deserve hanging a hundred times; but—make

yourself useful : tell me your companions, show me their haunts, take me to the graves of your victims, and your life may be spared."

"I know nothing of what you say, sahib," he repeated doggedly.

"Take him away," I commanded, "and in ten minutes' time hang him."

'Of course this was pure bounce, but he knew no better. I uttered the sentence sharply and rose to leave the hut. As I turned my back I heard a scuffle, and, looking quickly round, was just in time to ward the prisoner's hands from my throat. Taking the sepoy by surprise, he had with great energy dashed them aside and sprung at me.

In another moment the men had him down; and, though he struggled desperately, he was bound and dragged to his feet as I resumed my seat.

"None but the guilty would have behaved so," I said sternly—I knew no better in those days. "You have sealed your doom!"

The man took a deep breath—he was still panting from the struggle—and shouted with an excess of strength and enthusiasm :

"Jey Bhowanee."

It was the war-cry of Thuggee—the invocation to the goddess. If anything more was needed to convict him, it was provided in the extraordinary change in his appearance. All the signs of vice and cupidity which I had looked for in vain at first were now most prominent in the angry, passion-distorted face.

'After short consideration I sent him back to confinement. It was plain that we had made a capture of the first importance. The circumstances under which he had been taken, the demeanour and bearing of the man, his strength of will and virility, marked him as more than ordinarily dangerous. Such a man would, without doubt, be the leader, or at least a very prominent member, of any gang with which he was connected, and would possess just the sort of information we wanted. On the other hand, just these qualities in virtue of which his information would be so valuable would in all probability prevent us from acquiring it. Informers are supposed to be built of different material.

However, I determined to try him, and as a first step I had him informed that unless he consented to give the information we wanted, he would certainly be hanged in the morning. As an extra argument we built a gallows opposite the window of his cell.

'At first this only excited his derision. For an hour or more he kept up a stream of ribald and obscene jests, varied with vindictive and comprehensive curses which made the sepoy guard alternately laugh and shake their fists in righteous anger.

The small hours of morning, however, proved too much for him. I was wakened early and told he wanted to speak.

"Tell him he can say all he wants under the

rope," was my reply. I thought a little more fear of death would make his tongue all the readier.

'When the hour came the man was led out. Nothing remained of the scorn and defiance of the previous day ; a night of passion and fear had broken him up.

'As he caught sight of me he called out : "I will tell all, Sahib Bahadur." One of the sepoy, previously instructed, began to busy himself with the rope.

"All!" I said ; "nothing kept back?"

"Nothing," he answered eagerly. "All I have done, and my companions."

"And their names, all of them?"

"Yes."

"And help us to take them by all means and strategies in your power?"

'He hesitated at this ; but a glance at the man who held the rope, and who had now made a pretty noose in it, was enough.

"I will, sahib," he muttered. "My life will be saved?"

"On condition that you carry out your promise to the letter, I will do my best to save it."

'A table was brought, my native clerk prepared his writing materials, and there, within a yard of the gibbet, the prisoner told a tale of murder and robbery appalling in its extent, sickening in its cold-bloodedness and deliberation. To this he added a list of some thirty or forty accomplices, and, with a remarkable effort of memory, described the position of the rude graves of over one hundred victims.

'The same day we set out to investigate, and the following evening reached one of the indicated spots. There we found buried proof of the reality of one part of the Thug's confession, and, in that, a guarantee for the truth of the rest.

'A couple of weeks of activity passed. Thanks to Hosein, who had been shaven and otherwise disguised, we not only collected ample proof of the crimes committed, but succeeded in securing many of the culprits, who were taken to the nearest court and tried. By a judicious setting of caste against caste we managed to cause recriminations and retaliations amongst the prisoners, which led to their convicting each other, and so avoided the necessity of producing Hosein Ali as a witness—a course which would have been fatal to his usefulness.

'So far the informer had amply fulfilled his contract. He had, indeed, displayed a zeal which made me at times very doubtful of his sincerity. No government officer could have been more anxious to run the culprits to earth, no one more fruitful in devices to entrap them. I found out at last that this thoroughness was characteristic of the man in all things.

'One day I told him I thought he might count on getting off cheap, his services had been so valuable and so willingly given. I added a hope that he would lead a different life when the business was all over.

"What business, sahib?" he asked.

"When Thuggee is suppressed," I replied.

"Thuggee!" He made a wide gesture with his arms as though to indicate all India, and added, with a little smile that had a grain of pride in it : "We shall be old men, sahib."

I was but twenty-three then, and incredulous ; but he was right. I was gray when I came home, and I left Thugs behind me.

Well, the further the work of suppression advanced, the more difficult it became. The Thugs had enjoyed impunity so long that many of the bands had become careless and were taken with comparative ease ; but as the news of their capture spread, and the fate which met them became known, the villains grew more wary and difficult of approach.

We had, of course, spies and scouts out in all directions. The inhabitants of the villages were even too eager to give us information, and often the accounts were so conflicting that I was at a loss. In these difficulties Hosein was invaluable. He smelt out the true and reliable, and knew exactly what the Thugs in this or that dilemma would do or attempt.

About a month after Hosein's capture we got on the heels of a band which, by the signs, numbered about forty members. Instead of following them up, we crossed the river along the banks of which they were marching, and, hurrying on, got in advance of them. We knew they would have to cross later, and hoped to ambush them. The bank on our side of the river was covered with a thick and broad belt of jungle, beyond which was a chain of hills whose lower slopes were well wooded. In the shade of these trees we rested for the noon. In the early afternoon one of our scouts came in with news. About a mile in front of us he had seen a party of natives, whose manner seemed to him suspicious, entering a grove of trees. The possibility that this was a detachment of the band we were after at once occurred to me. We were on our feet at once, and pushing forward with all circumspection, almost succeeded in surrounding the grove without detection. At the last moment we were seen. We charged in, but, to our surprise, met with no resistance. Instead, indeed, of a band of determined and defiant robbers, we broke in on what seemed to be a party of travelling merchants in the deepest distress. The air was full of low lamentations. Pushing my way into the group, I saw the cause of the trouble. A body lay stretched out in the unmistakable attitude of death, covered reverently with a linen cloth. Catching sight of me, one of the mourners spoke.

"Shookr Khoda ! Now shall the wicked suffer."

"What is wrong?" I inquired.

"Thugs!" was the reply. "Our brother left us this morning in a fit of anger to continue his journey alone. Here we overtake him at noon, dead, and the villains are gone."

I plied the men with questions as to the direction taken by the robbers. "Eastward," they said. They had not seen them, but, from various signs, were confident. This was contrary to all our ideas as to their route, and I was considering how to rearrange our plans, when I heard Hosein Ali's voice whispering behind me : "My lord must not look round or show surprise. This body is still warm. The man is but just dead, and they who mourn have killed him. They are Thugs," he added.

I was too bewildered at first to speak, but, pulling myself together, partly grasped the situation.

Turning to the spokesman of the party, I did my best to convince him that I was completely taken in ; and, assuring him that we should most certainly pursue the culprits, left him, ostensibly to make preparations to that end.

"Now, what is this?" I asked Hosein.

"They are Thugs," he repeated, "an advanced guard who came across this traveller unexpectedly. They had just strangled him as we rushed in. This is an old dodge."

"What is?"

"This pretence of finding the man dead, and mourning."

"Old as it was, I was all but taken in, and but for Hosein the villains would have got away and sent me on a wild-goose chase."

In view of this, it was somewhat humbly I asked Hosein what was best to be done.

"Let these all be seized and bound without noise," he said, with his usual decision ; "the rest will come across after dark, and we will take them also."

It was no easy matter to carry out this plan. The Thugs were prone to suspicion, and, once alarmed, would fight desperately. However, by setting part of them to furnish my clerk with an account of the affair—an account which was afterwards highly esteemed as a specimen of impromptu lying—and plying the others with questions as to the direction taken by the alleged assassins, we managed to lull suspicion and divide the party into groups. Then, at a given signal, we threw them and tied them securely, to their intense amazement and disgust.

We did not move from the grove till daylight began to die out. Hosein had the whole detachment busy for some hours cutting a number of short bamboo sticks and boring holes in their ends, through which short lengths of cord were run. He had a way of holding his tongue until questioned, and, moreover, liked to have his plans matured before being called on to explain them ; so I let him proceed unquestioned until I saw he was ready.

"What are these things for?" I then asked him.

"Food for the Thugs, sir," he replied. "When they taste these they are silent."

Then I perceived that the mysterious articles were gags.

"They will come across the ford to-night," con-

tinued Hosein. "We will be in waiting, and as they land one by one, seize them and stop their voices."

"How can you be sure they will cross?" said I.

"Shall I not tempt them?" he answered. "Shall I not light a fire and send a cry across the water as these would have done if God had not delivered them into our hands?"

"How many of them are there?"

"I should say from thirty to forty."

"And we must leave a guard with the prisoners. We shall have our hands full," I said cautiously.

"I know this ford so well," responded Hosein; "only one man can land at a time. If the sahib will permit, I will stand by the bank and assist them out singly. It will be dark to-night, and there will be rain. Some of your men must leave their coats and dress like Thugs; and as I hand over the first of the robbers two of them shall seize him, fill his mouth with the wood, and tie him up so that he makes neither sound nor motion. In like manner with the others. The jungle and the rain will help us."

"It was a simple, daring scheme. It seemed one moment to be absolutely impracticable, and the next to have no real defect. Its very audacity was its strength. Of my two sepoy sergeants, to whom I explained the idea, one was certainly dubious: but he was always somewhat jealous of Hosein; the other was an optimist of the first class, and would just as cheerfully have tackled the job in broad daylight with half the force. In the end I consented. It would be a great feather in our caps if it succeeded.

"When the time came we moved noiselessly down to the ford, leaving six of our party with the prisoners in the grove. The night had settled in wet and starless. The jungle thickened towards the river. I had no little difficulty in closely following Hosein, who guided us. He ducked the low branches and squirmed through the thick undergrowth like a cat. A score of chattering creatures scurried away at our disturbing footsteps. A swift hare ran right across our guide's path, at which he stood stock-still and trembled.

"The worst of omens," he whispered; "it means failure and death."

"To Thugs?" I queried.

"Yes."

"Then push on," I replied; "it means failure and death to your friends across the river."

He was heartened at once, and went on. My first indistinct view of the ford renewed my previous distrust of Hosein's good faith. It seemed the last place one would select for a passage. The banks were ten or twelve feet high, and rose sheer out of the water. By looking closely, however, I made out a large, flat rock standing about five feet out of the stream and close to the bank, forming a natural if somewhat difficult step. The bank was only attainable by

first climbing the rock. All my distrust vanished: Hosein's plan fitted the place like the bark on a tree.

"Our dispositions were quickly made. The signal-fire was lit, and, after the proper interval, extinguished; and we lay down in silence to wait for the next move. The smell of the Indian night was an oppression; the rain was bringing out a hundred heavy fragrances from the plants, and a steamy cold moisture seemed to cover us as we lay. As the minutes passed and the noise of our approach ceased, the voices in the jungle were again manifest.

"At last we saw the answering fire. Hosein let himself down to the stepping-stone and stood erect. At the same moment the shriek of a jackal close at hand made me jump to my feet. From across the river the cry was repeated, and then I knew it was the second signal.

"As I stood I saw how hazardous Hosein's position was. He had only a narrow and wet foothold, and at the first glimmer of suspicion might be dragged off and murdered before any one could get to his assistance. I advanced a step with the view of bettering the arrangement, but Hosein, hearing the sound, turned, raising his hands warily with a whispered "Choop!" and I lay down again. A minute or two of extreme tension followed, and then, above the whipping sound of the rain on the river, I could just hear the careful splashing of the waders. Soon the head of the first one came dimly into sight, a black moving spot on the dark water, and behind it, in Indian file, other blots still more indistinct. As the leader neared the bank Hosein said a couple of words in "Moor," which elicited a low reply. I then saw him stoop and draw the man on to the rock beside him. It was an exciting moment, and I know I trembled—solely, I hope, from over-anxiety.

"The Thug gave himself a shake, and grasping the bank, climbed up. He reached the little group of disguised sepoys; there was a slight scuffle, and then all was quiet. The first one was secured.

"Six or seven more followed, and were secured with scarcely more noise than a scurrying rat would cause. As each one attained an upright position on the bank, he was gagged, overpowered, and laid out in the jungle helplessly bound. There was an anxious pause after the twelfth man, and from the rock below I heard a lot of whispering. Just as I was thinking it advisable to risk asking the reason, I saw Hosein stoop, draw up a large bundle, and throw it up on to the bank.

"The Thugs were passing us their booty!

"The remainder of the band brought each a similar parcel. I had crept to the assistance of my men, whose exertions to secure the robbers noiselessly were beginning to tell on them. As we approached the end one or two squeals escaped, but fortune favoured us and no alarm was given. Hosein's endurance was marvellous. One after another he helped the victims out of

the water and passed them up, and always with a sufficient interval. When, once or twice, we had more than the usual difficulty in convincing one of the captives of the wisdom of silence, he detained the next a while before landing him. Still, even he relaxed a trifle in the end. By some means the last man but one to cross took alarm as he reached the bank, and yelled out a warning. He was quickly pulled down and secured, but his successor, just about to reach up his hand to Hosein, hesitated and retreated. I heard a big splash, and Hosein disappeared. He had jumped in after the man, and engaged in a struggle which we could hear but only dimly see. As there was no need for further concealment, I climbed down the bank and slipped into the water, followed by one of my men. Hosein had apparently overpowered his man, and was forcing him towards the bank. As we approached, the Thug uttered a furious sentence in a dialect which I did not understand, and the next moment he was free and hurrying away. Hosein, for the first time to my knowledge, seemed dumbfounded and without resource. The sepoy and I dashed after the escaping Thug and held him. He was an elderly but exceedingly powerful man, who fought tooth and nail, and was only secured after the sepoy had hit him across the head with the hilt of his bayonet.

'With this we had them all: thirty-three murderers and twenty bales of spoil—a fine haul.

'We spent the remainder of the night in the grove where we had surprised the first lot, and early next day pushed on to Tearee, where I expected to find a court sitting.

'Following our usual precaution, Hosein travelled with the rear-guard, so that the prisoners should not see more of him than was necessary, although I more than suspected that he had been recognised by the old Thug. Something had changed him, anyhow. He was strangely thoughtful, even morose; and when he did speak, it was, for the first time, of his wife and child. It was plain that he was passionately fond of both, and his

great concern was that they might not learn what his occupation had been.

'Arrived at our destination, we found the court already sitting, so that our prisoners had not long to wait. In a couple of days the case against them was presented. The proofs of their guilt were overwhelming, and, as they thought more of defiance than defence, they were soon convicted and sentenced—fifteen of them, including the old man who had so nearly escaped, to be hanged, the rest to transportation to Penang.

'The following morning was fixed for the execution. Three hackeries conveyed the doomed men to the gibbets. They kept, or tried to keep, up their courage by the coarsest ribaldry and by jeering at their escort.

'As they stood in the centre of the clearing before ascending the platform, Hosein Ali created a sensation by slipping forward and kneeling humbly and contritely before the old Thug. The latter, with an indescribable accent of scorn, uttered a couple of words and spat derisively on the informer.

'The next moment the culprits had mounted the gallows. As each man stepped up he took the rope in his hands and tested it by bearing on it with all his weight. Satisfied of this, the fifteen men almost simultaneously thrust their heads through the nooses, and drawing the knots tight, jumped off the platform with a last cry of "Victory to Bhowanee!"

'The hangman's touch would have robbed them of caste.

'The excitement of this scene was not over when a fresh sensation was caused by the discovery of a man lying a short distance from the gallows with a bayonet through his heart, having killed himself by falling on the blade.

'It was Hosein Ali!

'"What is the meaning of this?" I cried.

'One of the bystanders turned towards the still swinging bodies of the Thugs, and pointing to the old man, said:

'"That was his father!"'

CURIOSITIES OF EARLY INSURANCE.

FHE insuring of property is a practice so common as to be one of the daily features of modern business life, and the pushing canvasser is not likely to let us drop into forgetfulness of its advantages. So thoroughly is insurance recognised as one of the leading principles in carrying on trade or holding property that one might naturally suppose it had taken its rise out of those commercial necessities which the nineteenth century has made more imperative on every one than they ever were before. The principle, however, is not so new; it has been

known and in common use for at least four or five centuries. Some writers, indeed, have maintained that marine insurance was practised by the Romans, and quote passages from the Roman historians to prove their assertion; but the instances given do not warrant the inference—they are rather cases where the one party to a transaction stipulates for compensation from the other in case of loss. The origin of real insurance, as it is now understood, must apparently be sought for in the annals of medieval commerce, and instances of it can be quoted from at least the early part of the fourteenth century. Spaniards, Italians, and Flemings

have been variously credited with the discovery ; but it is still doubtful to which of them the honour belongs.

Although marine insurance was thus a regular practice of these trading nations from the fourteenth century onwards, it is remarkable that insurance against fire is not heard of until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1609 a plan of fire insurance was proposed by some one to the Duke of Oldenburg, who was advised to insure the houses of all his subjects, in return for a yearly payment of a sum proportionate to their value. The duke, however, had the feeling (still shared by many on the question of life insurance) that it was a 'tempting of Providence,' for which, and other reasons, he declined the proposal.

It was the Great Fire of London that first made fire insurance a regular institution. The immense loss caused by this disaster opened the eyes of business men to the necessity for a remedy, and from 1669 to 1681 various schemes of insurance were laid before the Court of Common Council ; but in the latter year a private company took the initiative, and the court soon abandoned the slight attempt it made to issue insurance policies. The growth and multiplication of such companies since that time, more especially during the present century, is a natural result of the increase of wealth and of public appreciation of the benefits of insurance. It may be noticed, however, that the working of these early societies differed from the method now in use, and approached more closely to the ancient form which we are about to describe.

Centuries before the wise citizens of London recognised the value of fire insurance there existed a most interesting form of it, and that not in any of the great commercial nations of the Middle Ages, but in a remote island of the Atlantic—in Iceland. This fact, remarkable as it is in itself, will not seem so surprising to those who are acquainted with the ancient condition of that country, which has for several hundred years played but a small part in European history. Its first colonists, in the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries, were among the most enterprising of Norway's sons ; and for the next three centuries their new home rivalled the mother-country in most respects, and far excelled it in mental activity. The old poetry of Norway died out about the year 1000 A.D., and from that date, so long as there were skalds at the court of the Norwegian kings, they were Icelanders. At the same time they were careful farmers, daring seamen, and enterprising traders. They traded regularly with all the neighbouring countries, and thought little of an overland journey to Constantinople, where many of them served in the bodyguard of the Byzantine Emperor. At home, next to the necessary care of their herds and flocks, they were above all devoted to poetry, history, and law. To be skilled in the latter was a sure title to respect at a time when law-books were still unknown, and codes were

carried in the head of the 'Lawman,' or declared by the 'Law-speaker' at the meetings of the Althing, or yearly assembly. In the thirteenth century these laws of use and wont came to be written down, not officially, it would seem, as happened in other countries, but by persons interested in legal studies, and they are now preserved in a collection commonly known as *Grá-gás*, or gray-goose (a name of doubtful origin), which is used as a general name for the laws of Iceland prior to its union with Norway in 1262.

It is in this collection of laws that the interesting item of compensation for loss by fire occurs, a section which is quoted by the editor of an Icelandic journal of last year, in the first of a series of articles on the ancient civilisation of Iceland. The editor, Dr Valtyr Gudmundsson, is one of the best authorities on this subject, and uses the quotation as a text to point out to his countrymen the superior foresight of their ancestors in this respect. The modern Icelander has not yet realised the value of insurance, as shown by the fact that one of the foremost yeomen in the country had his farm burned down three times in succession without its being insured. It was otherwise in the old days, as Dr Valtyr points out. In the time of the old republic, the golden age of Iceland, every yeoman-farmer was by law compelled to be a member of a mutual insurance society. The method by which compensation for loss by fire was made is thus explained in *Grá-gás*, and is a striking proof of the thoroughly practical views of the old Icelanders :

'There are three houses in every man's dwelling for which compensation may be obtained in event of their being burned down.' (In Icelandic dwellings each room was a separate building, and so is called a 'house.') 'One is the women's sitting-room, another the common sitting-room, and the third the pantry where the women prepare the food. If a man has both a sitting-room and a hall, then at the spring assembly he shall choose whether he will rather have the sitting-room or the hall insured. If there is a church or chapel on any man's farm, then that is the fourth house liable for compensation, where it exists. If any of these houses afore-mentioned is burned down, the owner shall summon five of his neighbours, and get them to estimate the damage that has been done. They shall estimate the damage done to the house itself, and also that done to clothes and other valuables burned along with it; but only such clothes and valuables as the owner requires for daily use shall be reckoned for compensation. If a church is burned, there shall be reckoned along with it for compensation all the hangings, the choir, and the best bell that has been destroyed, if there were more than one, and all the furniture required for daily use ; the same thing shall be done in the case of chapels.'

When the damage had been valued by the neighbours, as above provided, one-half of the loss had

to be borne by the yeoman himself, and the other half was made good by all the other yeomen in the district. From each of these a certain amount was levied in proportion to the value of his property, and if this were not paid within a specified time it could be seized by law. At the same time it was provided that no one could be called upon to pay as his share more than one per cent. of his whole property, and it was not compulsory to compensate the same person for loss by fire more than three times.

This, it will be seen, was a procedure lying between regular insurance and State compensation. There was no real premium; but neither was there any necessity for it, because there was a sufficient funded stock in the whole property of the district. The method was, indeed, very similar to that of the first London companies, which called upon their members to pay their shares only when a fire actually occurred. There was here no company requiring to make a profit out of the insurance, nor was there any temptation to wilful fire-raising, because only the most necessary articles were insured, and even in their case half of the loss fell on the owner himself. The trouble of collecting the separate payments in each case was no doubt a drawback, as it would prevent the unfortunate yeoman from making a new start at once. It shows, however, a practical grasp of things that provision was thus made to prevent one who was perhaps a man of wealth and influence from suddenly losing a large part of his property, and with it his power. The influence of the great yeomen was a power for good in the Icelandic republic, and it would have been actually dangerous to the peace of a district if any such sudden revolution of fortune took place, and the wealthy man of one day was the beggar of the next. Such a change, however, might happen not only through losing his house by fire, but still more easily and disastrously by the loss of his live-stock. The Icelander's greatest wealth on land lay in his cattle (not so much in sheep then as now), and it was quite as necessary to be secured against loss from that quarter as from the burning of his house. Accordingly the law also provided compensation for the loss of cattle by disease, but with similar precautions against its abuse as in the case of fire.

'Compensation shall be given,' says *Grá-gás*, 'if the pest attacks a man's cattle, so that a fourth part or more of his stock die by it; then the district shall make good the loss. He shall summon five of his neighbours within two weeks after the pest ceases, and get them to estimate his loss. He shall state his loss to them, and show them the flesh and hides of the cattle that have died. Then he shall take an oath to them that his loss is as he has stated, or greater. He shall then declare in assembly how much his loss has been valued at, and the yeomen shall compensate him for half of it.'

As in the previous case, the amount paid by each person was not to exceed one per cent. of his

whole property, even although more than one person was entitled to compensation. 'If several men suffer loss in one season they shall be all compensated equally until the one per cent. has been paid. If the amount thus raised does not cover half the loss of each, then each of them shall receive so much less compensation in proportion as his loss is less.' By this limitation the inhabitants of a district were secured against excessive burdens, for in one year it might happen that the number of sufferers would be so large as to cause serious embarrassment if each had to be paid his full share. At the same time it would greatly increase the total loss to the individual, and in event of a widespread disease would be found a very inadequate provision. This is, perhaps, the weakest part of a scheme otherwise well contrived; witness the precaution against fraud by requiring that the flesh and hides of the dead cattle should be produced to the valuers.

These laws, which are peculiar to Iceland and not found in any of the other Scandinavian codes, show an amount of forethought and good-fellowship that is very striking. In this nineteenth century we have got the length of providing compensation for the farmer in cases of cattle disease, but rather by way of reconciling him to preventive measures than of helping him to get over his loss. In the case of damage by fire his only protection lies in the insurance company, to which he pays money without certainty of any return beyond the feeling of security it may afford him; or, if he does happen to find it a fortunate investment, he may yet incur the suspicions of his more uncharitable neighbours. There the Icelanders were a little wiser, treating it not as a matter of business, but as a measure for the welfare of the community, and to them, apparently, we must assign the credit of the first organised scheme to provide against losses of this kind. 'History repeats itself,' and many an excellent institution that seems to bear the true nineteenth century stamp upon it has flourished in unsuspected times and places.

S U M M E R.

Now Summer comes, on golden wing,
From sunny lands across the sea;
And wavelets, dancing joyously,
Their tinkling song of gladness sing.
O, dark the Winter lay, and drear,
Upon the lonely Northland isles;
But Ocean's face is wreathed in smiles,
And life and hope again are here.
So, heart, the lights and shades will fall
And checker all the climbing way,
And Hope will chant her roundelay,
And Life anew thrill to her call;
And men will move, with faces set,
Towards the lonely heights afar
Where lightens, like the morning star,
The Cross on Heaven's minaret.

J. J. HALDANE BURGESS.